



State of Tennessee
Department of State
Tennessee State Library and Archives
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**GOVERNOR WILLIAM CARROLL
PAPERS
1821-1827
(GP 7)**

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Date Completed: 1964; 1988

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

William Carroll served an aggregate of twelve years as Governor, a longer time than any other person, although there was a break of two years and two administrations between the two six-year periods. His administration was not marred by wars or Indians commotions; the country seemed to be enjoying a period of great prosperity (the Era of Good Feelings) and Carroll did nothing to interfere with it. Only his first series of administrations are dealt with here.

The plans inaugurated during the administrations of Willie Blount for the creation of a state prison came to fruition during the first Carroll administration. Desirous of keeping his institution abreast of the others, he spent much time studying the procedures of other states already operating detention and corrective facilities. The information gathered during his study constitutes a wealth of data for researchers of prison conditions, prisoner reports, costs and regulations of the various prisons, as well as a report of the Boston Penitentiary Reform Society.

In connection with this, there also seemed to be a continued tendency toward the lessening of punishments, and the papers contain countless examples of the exercise of executive clemency to the extent of remission of sentences for flogging, branding, and the pillory.

The account of the dealings of the State of Tennessee with a Negro slave named Harry is of interest. A minor, he was sentenced to be hung for engaging in a burglary with an older accomplice, in which a white man was killed. Through the intercession of several well-intentioned people, the boy was pardoned.

The last chapter of the story of the award of ceremonial swords to General Haynes and Jackson was finally written during the administration. To Congressman Newton Cannon was entrusted the duty of receiving from the manufacturer the swords and paying for them.

The papers also contain information of research value on the settlement of Kentucky-Tennessee border, the establishment of the "Great Western Road" from Washington to New Orleans and efforts to establish a canal system with the states of Georgia and Alabama to ensure that the produce of Tennessee could easily reach the seacoast.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Governor William Carroll

- 1788 Born March 3rd on a farm near Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.
- 1810 Moved to Nashville, Tennessee where he started a successful mercantile business; owner of the steam boat, *General Jackson*, the first such ship to reach Nashville.
- 1813 Married Cecelia Bradford.
- 1813 Served with General Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812, as Brigade Inspector.
- 1814 Elected Major General of the State Militia; served at the Battle of Horseshow Bend, where he was severely wounded.
- 1821 Won his first gubernatorial victory over Colonel Edward Ward; went on to serve two more successive terms.
- 1829 Re-elected to the first of two additional terms as Governor of Tennessee; served longer as Chief Executive than any other person in State history (at present).
- 1844 Died March 22nd; buried in the Old City Cemetery, Nashville, Tennessee.

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	--	Circular – To People of Tennessee by Hon. William Carroll	1821

* this letterbook contains correspondences from both series of administrations of
William Carroll

1 THS Miscellaneous Collection.